ability as well as by improving customer interface. These are as under:—

1. Telephone Exchanges and Media:

(a) introduction of Electronic Exchanges

(b) introduction of Electronic TAXs

(c) introduction of Electronic transit exchanges

(d) Phasing out of old and life expired electro mechanical exchanges

(e) introduction of PCM systems, optical fibre and digital microwave systems for interexchange junctions.

(f) introduction of AMA for electromechenical exchanges.

2. External Plant:

(a) laying of underground cables in ducts.

(b) Pressurisation of paper core underground cables.

(c) Use of jelly filled PVC insulated underground cables.

(d) Use of imporved terminations by introduction of terminations by insulation displacement method.

(e) Replacement of old fault prone cables.

(f) Use of insulated dropwire with proper accessories.

3. Computerisation of Services

(a) Fault Repair service.

(b) Financial Management systtm including commercial and billing activities.

4. Openisg of additional computerised customer service centres.

5. Increased access to teltphones by opening:—

(i) Additional public telephones for local & STD calls.

(ii) Additional telecom centres.

6. Improved Customer Interface:

(a) *Easy accessibility of officers*

In a large network some customers may have their problems which have not got attended to satisfactorily it is to resolpe such problems that all field officers are available to meet the customers from 3 p.m. to 4 u.m. on all working days. The customers can also see the area General Manager during these hours with prior appointment on all orking days (except Friday when they are available between 10.00 to 13.00 hours without any prior appointment.

(b) *Conduction open House Sessions/* Customer's meet:—

Open Houst Sessions are held at different levels to apprise our customers of our development plans. This also provides a forum for interaction with customers to know their observations about service and inform customers about what all is being done by MTNL to extend satisfactory service.

(c) *Coaducting Telephone Adalats*

In addition, telephone Adalats are regularly held once every quarter to provide on-the-spot redressal of grievances pertaining to service, billing etc.

7. Providing convenient, easy to remember 3/4 digit access codes for frequently used public utility number such as railway enquiry, airlines etc.

Ban on recruitment of Postmen in Bihar

1902. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite increase in the volume of mail traffic in Bihar in the recent years, Government have imposed total ban on recruitment of posmen in the State;

(b) if so, the details in this regard and reasons therefor;

(c) by when Government propose to lift the ban; and

(d) if the answer to part (a) above be in the negative, how many postmen were recruited in Bihar during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

(d) Vacancies of Postmen filled in Bihar during last three years.

1991 — 283
1992 — 112
1993 — 134 The recruitment process is nearing completion.

Speed Post Services

1903. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Speed Post Services, introduced by the Postal Department have grown in popularity and, as a result it has been expanded to cover larger number of cities in the country during the last three years;

(b) the details of volume of turn over on account of Speed Post Service for the last three years, year-wise, and number of centres catered by he service there years ago, and on date; and

(c) what are the plants of Government to face growing competition to the Speed Post Service from private courier services?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The details of traffic and number of Centres for the past three years are given as below:

Year	Traffic	Traffic growth compared to the previous year	No. of Centres
1990-91	3886571	24.5%	60
1991-92	5278277	35.80%	61
1992-93	7392716	38.00%	62
1993-94	10934725	46.69%	63

(c) To face growing competition from private couriers the Government has taken the following steps:—

(i) Provision of free pick-up services for regular users.

(ii) Availability of round-the-clock service at selected Booking Centres.

(iii) Facility for Book-Now-pay-Later for regular users to avail credit facilities.

(iv) Full refund of Speed Post charges are granted in case of delayed delivery of Speed Post articles.

(v) Establishment of Customer Service Wing at Speed Post Centres dedicated to process customer enquiries and grievances.

(vi) Marketing Wing for Speed Post Centres conducting market surveys to ascrtain the changing requirements of cusomers and redesign the existing products through more value added services.

(vii) and (viii) Planned installation of comupterised tracking and tracing system for Speed Post which will initially cover Delhi and Bombay Centres. An effective system of proof of delivery is also to be introduced very soon.